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ABSTRACT

Outside demands on universities to improve the manner in which they operate have placed increased pressure on faculty members to examine how they spend their time. Because administrators often resist any pressure to change the way they do business, faculty often find themselves in a situation of adjusting to a changing set of values and reward systems which may not be reflected in the culture of their immediate unit, division, department, or college. This paper discusses the changing priorities of faculty members and the potential impact of these changes on the professorate. It also examines each of the types of scholarship identified in Ernest L. Boyer's "Scholarship Reconsidered, Priorities of the Professoriate". This book's influence on the established climate and culture of American higher education, particularly its influence on the role of the faculty member, is explored. The author's recurring theme is the consideration of the differences that appear to exist between national discussions about the changing role of the faculty member and what is taking place on local campuses. Increased accountability in use of time and space is to be welcomed. (Contains 7 references.) (GLR)

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SCHOLARHIP RECONSIDERED AND ITS IMPACT ON THE FACULTY MEMBER

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INTRODUCTION

Nationally we are witnessing an increase in the level of external criticism directed at American higher education. It has been suggested that the entire mission of the comprehensive university should been redefined (Lynton and Elman, 1987). The severe budgetary pressures that are affecting both public and private colleges and universities serve to underscore the issue. The situation is most pronounced in public higher education, where state legislatures have been reluctant to fund institutions at levels commensurate with their needs. In fact, in many states, budgets have been severely cut. Within an environment in which universities are being asked to examine their missions, Ernest Boyer's (1990) book, *Scholarship Reconsidered, Priorities of the Professoriate* challenges the basic assumptions we have held for years about the role of the faculty member.

Boyer's book was published as universities were responding to threats to the manner in which they have operated for generations. While most of us in public higher education can cite our own original examples of outside pressures, there are several which seem to have taken on national significance:

a. Legislatures in 37 states have initiated programs to assess the outcomes the being produced by public universities in their states (Hunt, 1990) These outcomes programs attempt to assess the quality of the educational programs in the university. At the heart of these mandates is the implied assumption that public education is producing graduates who are not able to accomplish certain valued tasks.

b. Regional accrediting bodies, especially the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges, have developed elaborate criteria to judge the effectiveness of the teaching program of member institutions. These criteria require universities to assess the student progress on learning and to provide public reports about how well their students are doing. In theory, regional accreditation can depend on the institutionalization of these assessment measures.

c. Several states have now begun workload studies to determine how many hours faculty members work each week. Beyond providing simple reports on hours worked, states are asking faculty to report *how* they spend their time, especially how much time each week they devote to meeting with students.

d. Some state legislatures are boldly suggesting that the universities redefine their missions to include more emphasis on undergraduate education and less on scholarly research..

e. Initiatives are being forwarded nationally to incorporate such tools as teaching portfolios, standardized testing in disciplinary content, and senior capstone experiences to focus faculty members' time on the learning environment.

All of these trends are placing increased pressure on faculty members to examine how they spend their time. Unfortunately, these efforts are often seen by administrators as constraints imposed on the university from "the outside." Universities often resist any pressure to change the way they do business. Thus, individual faculty members find themselves in an uncomfortable situation of adjusting to a changing set of values and reward systems which may not be reflected in the culture of their immediate unit, the division, department or college.

This paper, will examine the changing priorities of faculty members and the potential impact of these changes on the professoriate. A recurring theme in paper will be a consideration of the differences that appear to exist between national discussions about the changing role of the faculty member and what is taking place on local campuses. Much of the analysis will be grounded in ideas presented by Boyer in *Scholarship Reconsidered.*

PART I: CONFUSING CURRENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In 1990, Boyer wrote

> ...what we are faced with today is the need to clarify campus missions and relate the work of the academy more directly to the r ealities of contemporary lives. We need to especially ask how institutional diversity can be strengthened and how the rich array of faculty talents in our colleges and universities might be more effectively used and continuously renewed. We proceed with the conviction that if national higher learning institutions are to meet today's urgent academic and social mandates, their mission must be carefully redefined and the meaning of scholarship creatively reconsidered." (p.13)

Perhaps more than any other idea expressed over the past decade, this passage has shaken the foundation of American higher education. We in public higher education, have been thrust into a period of self examination. External critics have begun to ask very pointed but important questions about how universities establish their priorities and how faculty members spend their time.

This situation has developed into a major national debate because of the apparent perceived conflict between teaching and research activities. This conflict existed long before Boyer's work, but his treatise addressed many long felt frustrations by some faculty members and by others who do not value of the research mission of the university.

The public debate over the role of research has fostered a defensive climate in which higher education is under careful scrutiny. In Kentucky, we are undergoing a major reform of the structure of kindergarten through 12th grade education. The state legislature has supported enthusiastically the reform movement. What forms the core of this reform is notion that students are to be judged on their abilities to accomplish certain tasks (valued outcomes) in the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades. The testing is being done by an outside agency and the results, by individual school, are made public each year. There is sentiment among some legislators that similar reform should next come to higher education.

The debate on the role of research vs. teaching became a major news story in the last days of the administration of our previous governor. Former Gov. Wallace Wilkinson arranged his own appointment to the board of trustees of our major research institution, the University of Kentucky, with the expressed purpose of "reforming" the university to ensure that UK was devoting sufficient resources to undergraduate education. It was made clear during the Wilkinson controversy, that we in public higher education have not done an effective job explaining the role that faculty member research fulfills on our university campuses. It would not be too drastic to conclude that higher education today is under siege.

At a recent national conference on faculty roles sponsored by the American Association of Higher Education, David Scott (Scott, 1993), the former provost of Michigan State University, argued that the vast majority of current scholarship takes place in a vacuum because it is rarely cited by other scholars. He claimed that in the humanities, more than two thirds of all published scholarship is never cited anywhere. In the hard sciences, a bit higher percentage is cited in other journals but the trend stills holds. Scott questioned whether or not faculty ought to be spending time working on narrow papers that no one else is going to read. By his estimate, at Michigan State, faculty presently spend about half their time on teaching and the other half on research. Realistically, he suggested, faculty should be spending only about a third of their time on research. Scott's position is especially interesting given his track record as a chief academic officer of a major land grant research institution. Assuming for a moment that Scott is correct, and the Michigan States of the world need to redefine faculty roles, should not the regional comprehensive and teaching institutions be thinking about doing the same thing?

What should be clear from the above discussion is that a major national discussion is taking place about faculty roles and rewards. From discussions such as these have come efforts to redefine such roles. But, the extent to which these discussions have filtered down to the individual colleges and departments, remains a question. It may be that many faculty members are not even aware of the serious questions being raised about how they spend their time. Or, they may be aware that they are the subjects of criticism, but may not know from where the criticism is coming. The current situation has created a feeling of uncertainty within the higher education community. For faculty, there are at least four distinct drives: to teach, to do research, to get promoted and tenured, and to structure their roles in a manner that satisfies those who have an opinion about how they spend their time. In looking at the current situation, it seems we may be moving into a period during which the political environment will dictate the manner in which these drives are carried out.

Because of declining funding and the repercussion from external criticism, conditions in higher education will be in a dynamic state over the next several years. We are going to see an increase in the number of workload studies in universities like the one recently completed in Ohio (Baker, 1992) and more frequent discussions about combining universities into larger systems such as the deliberations taking place in Montana, Mississippi and Louisiana. Within several years, there will probably be an attack on the tenure system by state legislators asking why "senior faculty who work only 6 or 9 or 12 hours a week need to be tenured." And, most importantly, there will be a continuing public debate about how faculty spend their time.

It is within this climate of cross currents that Boyer examined the current state of scholarship in his influencial book.

PART II CONTRIBUTIONS OF BOYER

Since the publication of Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered*, the ideas put forth in the book have challenged the foundation of American higher education. Boyer's critique, while not nearly as pointed as that by Sykes (1989), an "outsider," does conclude that a great gulf exists between what the university says it is and how it rewards performance. According to Boyer, while the university suggests it is a balanced blend of three traditions, teaching, scholarship and service, it rarely assigns equal weight to all three when judgments are made about merit. In Boyer's words..."when we speak of being scholarly it usually means having academic rank in a college or university and being engaged in publication," (p. 15). Boyer argues further that in existence now is ..."a

restrictive view of scholarship, one that limits it to a hierarchy of functions. Basic research has come to be viewed as the first and most essential form of scholarly activity with other functions flowing from it," (p.15). The prevailing model, to Boyer, is an individual who discovers knowledge in the laboratory and then conveys that knowledge to students in the classroom.

After 20 years of teaching and serving as an administrator at four institutions, the writer believes this model continues to be the commonly accepted view of scholarship in the communication disciplines. Tenure and promotion decisions are often made on the basis of whether or not the individual has a sufficient number of publications in journals such as the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *Communication Monographs*, and *Human Communication Research*. Rarely have panels at our disciplinary meetings, including the Association for Communication Administration, been devoted to the development of techniques to convey knowledge to students.

Boyer is extremely critical of this traditional model of scholarship for the future of American higher education. In addition to pure scholarship, Boyer argues that:

> the work of the scholar also means stepping back from one's investigation, looking for connections, building bridges between theory and practice and communicating one's knowledge effectively to students specifically. We conclude that the work of the professor might be thought of as having four overlapping functions. These are the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of integration, the scholarship of application and the scholarship of teaching, (p.16).

Briefly, let us examine each of these types of scholarship identified by Boyer.

a. The Scholarship of Discovery. According to Boyer, this is analogous to the traditional form of scholarship we have all understood. It involves gathering knowledge for its own sake and is characterized by the love of inquiry and the ability of the investigator to pursue research wherever it leads. Most of our communication journals contain a great number of articles fitting into this category. Boyer's critics have suggested that he wants to diminish the role of traditional scholarship. However, Boyer claims that his book is intended to strengthen scholarship by looking at it in some new broaden ways. From Boyer's perspective, scholarship of discovery "contributes not only to the stock of human knowledge, but also to the intellectual climate of the university," (p. 17).

b. The Scholarship of Integration. Boyer's integration involves scholars giving meaning to isolated facts and putting them into perspective. While related to discovery, this area of scholarship encompasses:

> overlapping academic areas, challenging traditional disciplinary categories, developing new typologies in knowledge, and it means really interpreting and fitting one's own research or the research of others into larger intellectual patterns, (p. 19).

Most universities structurally inhibit efforts to engage in interdisciplinary scholarship, according to Boyer. But, such efforts should be encouraged if we are going to broaden the definition of scholarship. He suggests that disciplines do not fall into absolute categories but, rather that knowledge can be found in the areas between traditional boundaries. Boyer calls for a variety of approaches which emphasize efforts to be more interdisciplinary, interpretive and integrated. As we think of the communication

disciplines, we can point to occasional efforts to feature interdisciplinary work at our conferences. But, fewer examples can be found on the pages of our scholarly journals.

c. Scholarship of Application. Here, the scholar is asking how knowledge can be responsively applied to consequential problems. How can it be helpful to individuals as well as institutions. While the notion may be perceived as radical by some, Boyer suggests that societal problems, rather than narrowly construed theoretical relationships, should be the guiding principle in research. Most of us in higher education realize that there is a large gap between the needs of the greater community and the reward structure of the university. This gap has increased the level of tension between the public university and state coordinating bodies. In Kentucky, the state legislature and our state's coordinating board have suggested that universities take a more active role in elementary and secondary education. This had been a "tough sell" for university administrators throughout the state. Most faculty members do not know much about K-12 education. More importantly, the university reward structure does not encourage academics to come out of their offices to work with the public school system. Most of us can cite other examples where faculty members have resisted involvement in local problems because they are not rewarded for their efforts. Yet, as Boyer suggests, this real world of involvement is drastically needed and should be part of any faculty member's scholarly agenda. However, Boyer does differentiate between what he calls "citizenship" and projects referred to as "scholarship." Boyer points out that the traditional view of service has meant good works. But, the scholarship of application are those...

> ..activities tied to one's special field of knowledge and relate and...flow directly out of this professional activity. Such service is serious demanding work, requiring the rigor and the accountability traditionally associated with research activities," (p. 22).

Scholarship Reconsidered makes a strong case for universities to reward faculty work that moves the teacher beyond the ivory tower and into real life settings.

d. Scholarship of Teaching. According to Boyer, teaching begins with what the teacher knows. He defines teaching as a "dynamic endeavor involving all of the analogies, metaphors and images that build bridges between the teacher's understanding and the student's learning," (p.23). Boyer suggests that the teacher transforms and extends knowledge and carries ideas beyond the traditional classroom. Boyer quotes Oppenheimer who suggested that:

> it is proper to the role of the scientist that he (sic) not merely find the truth and communicate to his fellows but that he teach and that he try to bring the most honest and intelligible account of new knowledge to all who will try to learn, (p. 24).

Boyer implies that the university should be just as willing to recognize and reward this form of scholarship as the others.

In concluding *Scholarship Reconsidered*, Boyer argues that the roles of the scholar must be defined more broadly than is presently the case. This redefinition is necessary, because knowledge is acquired not only through research but through synthesis, practice, and teaching as well.

In evaluating the impact of *Scholarship Reconsidered*, we can examine the book's influence on the established climate and culture of American higher education. Certainly, people are reading and reacting to Boyer's ideas. But, the question to be considered in the

rest of this paper is: has *Scholarship Reconsidered* had any direct influence on the role of the faculty member?

Part III THE IMPACT OF BOYER ON THE FACULTY MEMBER

With external pressures coming from state legislators and accrediting bodies, all of which are aimed at the role of the individual faculty member, many both on the inside and the outside of the university are expressing opinions about the work life of the faculty member. In fact, one might even be so bold as to suggest that everything we have traditionally accepted about scholarship is now up for grabs. This unstable environment has heaped added pressure upon the individual faculty member, who may well be perceiving that the rules are changing just as s/he has learned them.

The faculty member is in a complex situation. National discussions are taking place which could change the job description of the professoriate. State coordinating councils and centralized university systems have begun to seriously re-examine the role of the faculty member. The recent conference on faculty roles, sponsored by the American Association for Higher Education, has given a national stamp of approval to the redefinition movement. In fact, the popularity of *Scholarship Reconsidered* is clear evidence of the importance of the debate over these issues.

There are, however, differences between what is said nationally about faculty redefinition and what is said locally. Some interesting data emerged from a Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching study of 5,000 faculty members at all types of institutions (Boyer, 1989).

*As of 1989, 62% of faculty perceive that teaching effectiveness should be the primary criterion for granting promotion. But, more than 56% of faculty at doctoral institutions and 34% at research institutions responded that they had seen the shift "towards research away from teaching and service at their own institutions."

*55% of faculty at research institutions, 54% of faculty at doctoral institutions and 30% of faculty at comprehensive universities still perceive that number of publications is the highest priority for tenure on their campuses.

*Almost 40% of all respondents nationally suggested that, at their institutions, publications used for tenure and promotion decisions were only counted and were not qualitatively evaluated.

*More than 68% of all faculty agreed with the statement, "at my institution we need better ways besides publications to evaluate the scholarly performance of faculty."

*For all faculty under 40, 53% indicated that their job was a source of strain for them.

*In terms of importance, 77% rated their academic discipline as very important to them but only 53% rated their department as very important. Only 40% rated their university (40%) as very important.

While so much discussion has been taking place nationally about redefining faculty roles, at the local level, apparently there still remains differences between what faculty members prefer their roles to be and what they perceive them to be.

In public higher education, especially at the research and comprehensive universities, intrusion from the state legislators, questioning the amount of time faculty spend on research, is often greeted with disdain. The usual response is for the university to question this "micro-management." However, since budgets are determined by state legislatures, universities will eventually be forced to address the concerns raised.

Much of the pressure comes from legislators who want faculty to give more attention to undergraduate education. Some presidents, vice-presidents, and deans recognize these trends and are attempting to influence policy intended to broaden the role of faculty members. Given the data reported previously, many individual faculty members would welcome this redefinition. Clearly, change is being discussed. It is difficult to determine, however, if real change is taking place at the level of the individual unit.

In my view, however, there has been little chance within individual academic departments. There may be two possible explanations for this. First, most departments have polices and procedures which carefully govern the criteria for merit, promotion and tenure. These policies usually emphasize publication, and they are not easily changed. Second, since most of the national dialog has taken place in the state capitals, at meetings of national education organizations, and in the central administrative offices of universities, the ramifications may not have yet filtered down to the department level. We find a situation that pressure to change what is expected of faculty members is coming from younger faculty, who are dissatisfied with their current state, from central administrators, and from the state capitals. But, resistance to any form of redefinition may reside with senior faculty members and department chairs, who would not welcome any movement away from the status quo.

Returning to our consideration of the individual, this situation is likely to create conflict, especially for younger faculty members. The assistant professor might want to engage in a broaden range of activities, according to the notions of Boyer. But, the senior professors in the department may not be willing to reward any variance from traditional behaviors. Such pressure points will make life difficult for the faculty member. As we have all heard many times, the advice to the young faculty member is ..."spend your time working on your research."

To conclude, let me address our discipline. While there have been very worthwhile attempts to broaden the range of content presented at national and regional meetings, most of the work being presented and published in our journals remains what Boyer would call the scholarship of discovery. Further, most departments and colleges still value the presentation and publication of narrow scholarly articles as the primary evidence of scholarship. Faculty who have completed traditional doctoral programs become socialized to the scholarship of discovery as *true* scholarship.

Certainly, professional organizations have a role in helping to resolve this developing national dilemma. Organizations such as the Association for Communication Administration, the Speech Communication Association, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, and the regional communication organizations can promote a broadened definition of scholarship. Some obvious ways to do this are the following:

a. Efforts should be made by program planners at national and regional meetings and by editors of journals to include programs and articles that focus on application and teaching as well as the scholarship of discovery. This is going to be an uphill battle with some entrenched dogmatic individuals. But, the communication

disciplines need to recognize national trends and respond to the concerns being raised by our critics. A few publications such as the *Journalism Educator*, the *Speech Communication Teacher*, and the *Journal of the ACA* usually include several application articles. In some departments, though, publication in these journals is viewed as inferior to publication in the more standard research-based periodicals. Textbooks and program learning guides are also occasionally viewed as unscholarly. Often, however, textbooks have a readership that is many times larger than an article in one of our scholarly journals. The point here is that the professional organizations, especially the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication and the ACA, should take an active role in promoting a broaden view of scholarship in the field.

b. There is an opportunity for communication organizations to become leaders in the effort to redefine scholarship. Because of the eclectic nature of the communication disciplines, we may be more willing and able to embrace different approaches to learning and teaching than some of our sister professional bodies. If the communication disciplines prove willing to examine the broader application questions, they could lend greater legitimacy to the issues of redefinition within the scholarly community. Further, this willingness would place the communication disciplines on the cutting edge American higher education. Within the various communication fields, there are already people doing work in the areas identified by Boyer. Unfortunately, they have not always found a forum in which to influence the collective thinking of the other individuals within the discipline.

c. With the advent of program assessment, speaking across the curriculum programs, and national performance-based funding, the current political climate demands that departments justify their existence in ways beyond simply counting the number of graduates produced and the collective citations of articles produced by the faculty. Accrediting bodies and coordinating agencies will ultimately force a significant reexamination of the way we do things at both the collegiate and the department levels. The SCA Legislative Council's recognition of the Commission on Assessment and Testing is an important step in providing a clearinghouse for our discipline's response to the assessment movement. Regional organizations must also monitor and promote initiatives in the communication disciplines that respond to national trends. Too few programs at national and regional meetings deal with the important professional development issues affecting the professoriate. There should be at least as many programs at national and regional meetings devoted to what our students are learning as to the latest developments in the sub-specialties of the field.

In summary, it is an exciting time. In the short term, even more conflicting pressures on individual faculty members are likely to be felt. In the long term, we are going to witness a revolution in higher education. My final point is that the more we, in higher education, are held accountable for our use of time and space, for the performance of our graduates, and for how we spend our money, the more efficient we become. We need to welcome this observation. It can only lead to greater accountability.

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